

SATURDAY June 20, 2015

ATIA celebrated its 70th ANNIVERSARY



ATIA celebrated its 70th ANNIVERSARY

with a great reception

ATIA was founded on June 18th, 1945 and is the largest employer's organization on Aruba. ATIA's membership represents directly and indirectly through other sister organizations, such as AHATA and WAB, more than 80% of the private sector employment on Aruba. Its main goal is to provide relevant services to its members; to champion, promote and protect the members' interests and the business community in general.

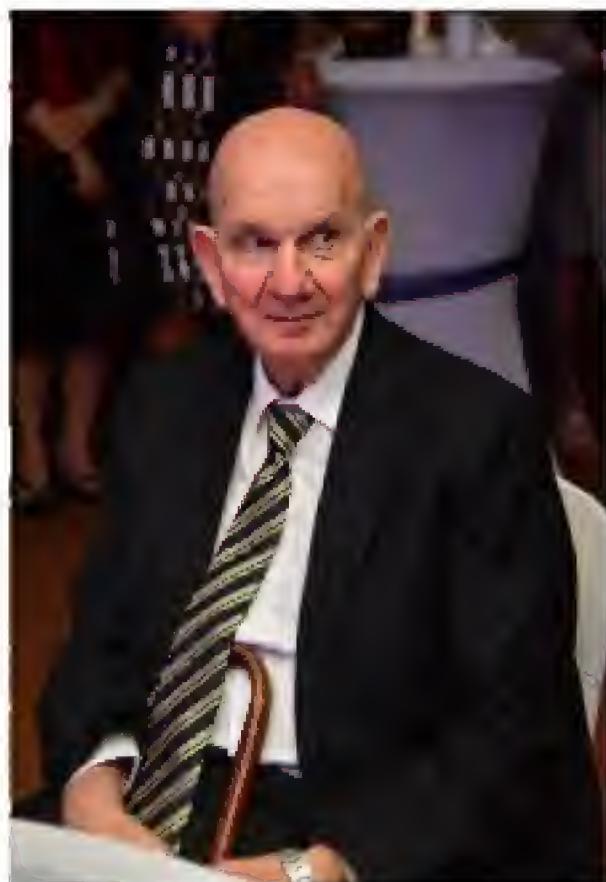
The promotion of the interest of trade and industry is fully intertwined with the interests of Aruba and its people. Free enterprise is inherently a social activity, directed towards increasing prosperity and quality of life of the population. This can only be realized by a fair level playing field for an enterprise within a healthy business climate, directed towards improving Aruba's competitive edge. For the year 2015 ATIA will focus on Small & Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) since they play a pivotal role in our economy. More than 75% of our private sector consists of SMEs. As

of 2015 ATIA will initiate a Free Clinic program especially designed for SMEs. The Education & Training Center program will also continue for anyone who is interested in the educational activities offered by ATIA.

The celebration started with a speech by Mr. James Fazio, CEO of the Aruba Airport Authority (AAA), followed by the chairman of ATIA, Mr. Michel Henriquez, who elaborated on the 70 years of existence of ATIA.

Mr. Elias Fernando Mansur 'Don Mansur', was honored for his years of dedication and valuable collaboration as the President of ATIA during the years 1976 to 1978.

Mr. Igmar Reyes, the Director of ATIA, delivered a closing speech where he expressed his gratitude to all the members for their support and contribution during the last decades and look forward to the next 70 years. The Government of Aruba, Mr. Fredis Refunjol honored ATIA with his presence in their 70th Anniversary Celebration.



Toward the creation of the Green Faculty

TNO Caribbean and University of Aruba FORMALIZE RELATION



THE signatures made it official, but the cooperation between the University of Aruba (UA) and TNO Caribbean has been a fact since the establishment of the Caribbean branch of TNO.

TNO Caribbean Director Jan Ebbing and UA Rector Ad Interim Luciano Milliard signed a Memorandum of Understanding during the first TNO Caribbean Symposium which was held recently at the UA Aula. The signing sealed a natural collaboration aimed to solidify the foundation for Aruba's goal to become a sustainable society in general and the creation of a Green Faculty at the UA in particular.

Mr. Jan Ebbing said at the occasion that it is in order to achieve the Green Faculty, it is crucial to have trusted partners. TNO is an institution that through research applies new technology into practice and the UA, as a trusted partner is creating the next generation of brave bright minds who can help with the challenges of the future. "I am always looking for people I can trust and want to work with," TNO Director Ebbing added.

The MoU is not

really necessary according to Patrick Arens, Financial Director at the UA, as TNO Caribbean and University of Aruba have already been working on several projects. "The pairing between TNO Caribbean and University of Aruba is a very natural, organic way of working together. We need TNO to help up draft programs and do the research involved." TNO Caribbean has developed itself into a very valuable partner, Arens added.

Ruurd Schoolderman of TNO Caribbean, who has been at the forefront of the process to kick off the fifth faculty at the UA, stated that the Green Faculty was an objective of TNO since opening a branch in Aruba four years ago. "These things take time to mature," Schoolderman commented, based on the many challenges that still have to be overcome in order for the Green Faculty to take off.

The main challenge was the required finances. The original idea for the government to absorb the costs was modified to

accommodate the financial reality of Aruba and UA, and that required creativity by TNO Caribbean and the University of Aruba.

"We (TNO and UA) approached it a little bit differently the second time around. We looked at it from a triple Helix prospect," Arens outlined. The Triple Helix approach entails a joint effort from the industry, the education sector and the government. A new plan for a bachelor's program focusing on sustainability and green energy was drafted from these stakeholder meetings. A program that is to be sustained by the offering of professional development programs for the industry and government, therefore opening the scope for lifelong learning in those sectors. In addition, the goal of the new faculty is to offer more summer and winter school programs, aimed at students from the region and Aruba, as well as to professionals from the region who want to upgrade their knowledge and skills on the area of sustainability. Besides the Green Faculty program, there will be a research center where Aruba will function as a living lab for sustainability concepts and technologies, "to see how they stack up on the conditions that we have here." Those programs will help fund the bachelor's studies of the Green Faculty.

In addition to TNO, UA is counting on partners including the Arizona State University, the University College Utrecht and the University of South Carolina, as well as other institutions to assist in the development of the new Green Faculty. The Aruba government is in the process of applying for funding for the needed, new facilities to house the Green Faculty through the European Development Fund. The optimistic outlook is that the funds will be allocated by next year, which means the new faculty may be open for students in 2017.

"It is going to take sustained efforts from all parties to really move this agenda forward," Schoolderman concluded and by doing so, the Green Faculty will be an important driving force "for sustainable practices throughout the (Caribbean)region," in words of UA Rector ad Interim Luciano Milliard.

For more information, contact Ruurd Schoolderman, BRIDGE Project Implementation Manager, at ruurd.schoolderman@tno.nl, telephone (218) 251-6174; or Jan Ebbing, Director TNO Caribbean at jan.ebbing@tno.nl, telephone (297)-5823100.



Ms. Evelyn Wever Croes

Violence does NOT HELP

THE Leader of the political Party MEP, Evelyn Wever-Croes started a non-violence call after a meeting with the Chief of Police. This is due to the recent tension that exists between Grupo di 7 and the Government of AVP. "Even though the MEP party has nothing to do with this problem, I still want to comply with my agreement with the Chief of Police to advise the country against violence. The incident of last Sunday scared a lot of people. The community of Aruba is suffering due to the poor management of this Government. Many do not have food for their kids and have to spend nights in darkness because they do not have money to pay electricity. Some are desperately looking for money to pay school fees otherwise their children will not receive their report card. Our country is going through hard times; this is the reality Aruba is in right now.

On the other hand, we see the coordinators of the AVP Party working in the Government. We see that 17 million florins are being wasted because of the two additional ministers the Government appointed. Now the BBO tax is going up to 4%, the Government promised to eliminate it completely.

We have to understand the desperation of this country. The protest of last Sunday started very peacefully, but the protestors were provoked by the Prime Minister, he knows very well not to confront the protestors. This incident shocked the whole community. It is shocking, when the ex Prime Minister Mr. Henny Eman, brother of Mike Eman, sent his people to beat MEP voters on the street. Even more shocking is when the leader of AVP Fraction, Mr. Baba Herde, declared they will send their people on the streets to look for trouble-makers, and they will not take any responsibility of the outcome, instead will hold the Leader of MEP responsible for the violence that may escalate in the country.

The confrontation of last Thursday in Kurimiaw is also alarming. The Prime Minister Mike Eman did not comply with the agreement of non-violence. This proves that Mike Eman is not in full mental capacity; otherwise he would not have sent 60 people to attack a group of 10 that were protesting quietly.

At these moments, our country deserves leaders that are able to handle real situations. Violence is not the solution for our problems. Violence does not reduce our debt. Violence will not eliminate the Financial Supervision (CFT). Violence will not eliminate our social problems. Aruba deserves better.



The Government must introduce SPECIFIC RULES for the 'Boot Camp'

OVER a year ago, a disciplinary center was established under the name 'Boot Camp'. This organization was designed to correct, educate and form our youth. The basic concept was that the parents, who could not deal with their children, would pay a certain monthly amount so that their kids could get a good social formation, trusting that this was a good supervised center and in good condition.

However, according to Maisa Faro of the PDR Party, the project was not well structured to the point that last week several official departments of the Government and the departments of public order had closed the center, after observing that many situations were not according to current rules.

"I can understand that some parents do not know how or where to go for help for their children who are misbehaved.

The Government has to introduce specific rules for these kinds of institutes, to ensure the parents, the community and the problematic kids, that a good supervision will be

provided in such institutions. The formation of young problematic children should be entrusted to professionals that can guide these young children in their conduct. In my concept, a person in charge with an organization like this, should be a professional in social education and must have experience to manage a center that has to do with the formation and correction of young children. And Boot Camp should also comply with these rules and also must apply the hygienic rules and provide the appropriate facility. The Government should consider this situation very seriously, and evaluate if additional laws should be introduced for organizations like this, where young children are being formed. It is good for the Government to invest in tourism and in other areas for the growth of the economy of Aruba to run optimal, but the social formation of our community is also highly important, because it is the community that will go on the labor field and it is the education and social formation of the people that will offer good service for the economy of Aruba to grow," stated Mrs. Faro.



First Aruba Summer School concludes with CONCRETE TIPS

FROM docking stations for electric busses to conscious reduction in energy usage may help Aruba to achieve its goals to be fossil fuel independent by 2020, but it will take a lot of effort and public awareness. These are some of the conclusions of the first Aruba Sustainable Island Solutions Summer School. Students came here from Arizona State University and University of West Indies for a two-week research program. The students were led by Professor Nathan Johnson of the ASU and spent two weeks visiting sites, conducting interviews, and attending presentations by Aruba stakeholders and University of Aruba lecturers. The first Aruba Summer School is a project of TNO Caribbean and was realized with the support of its partners, the Arizona State University and the University of Aruba. It was closed off with a symposium organized by TNO Caribbean at the University of Aruba. Minister of Education Michelle Hooyboer opened the session, posing a challenge to TNO Caribbean and the University of Aruba, namely to create premises under which students leave the classroom, find solutions and come up with innovations that later may help them become entrepreneurs. Ruurd Schoolderman of TNO Caribbean said Aruba formed a great backdrop for studying challenges that arise when dealing with sustainability issues. The Summer School, a joint venture between the TNO Caribbean, Arizona State University and University of Aruba was a perfect fit to provide students the opportunity to analyze projects and processes in a small island setting, thus allowing for a better understanding how to translate solutions from a larger context to island solutions. "Sustainability requires local appropriate solutions," Schoolderman explained, adding that societal and economic elements have to be taken in consideration as

well. This is what the first Summer School aimed to achieve. "But it is also about building partnerships, as sustainability touches all aspects of society." Therefore, in order to achieve sustainability, the industry, government and education sectors need to come and work together. "And it is about building networks, how to learn from the best practices that are happening in the region." The fact that the first Aruba Summer School was able to attract students from the University of West Indies indicates they are ready to share their knowledge with Aruba and vice versa. These students will also take their experiences acquired here back to their respective islands. Schoolderman moreover said the Minister's wish to create entrepreneurs out of students is exactly what the Triple Helix approach which TNO proposes is about, namely to have research institutions join education and industrial sectors in working toward solutions and innovation.

At the closing Summer School symposium, TNO researcher Caroline van der Weerd and UA student Sharon Meijer presented their results of studies conducted on sustainable practices of the island's private sector. Van der Weerd concluded that, based on focus group discussions with over 40 private sector representatives, there is a willingness to adopt sustainable practices. Yet there is a need for more awareness and clarity with regard to policies ensuring a level playing field and proper incentives. Meijer's study on the other hand showed that there is a perception that most small and medium enterprises are not applying sustainable practices, her study found that a large portion are at least partially sustainable. With a little nudge, more awareness, most of Aruba's businesses can indeed become sustainable enterprises.



Dera GAI

June 24, 2015



ARUBA'S harvest festival is now a cultural celebration featuring traditional song and dance. The symbol of the rooster and bright yellow and red costumes are central to events held at various locations including community centers. DeraGai means "burying of the rooster" in the local language. It is a cultural festival which has been celebrated for about 100 years in Aruba with traditional song and dance. This holiday is rife with both pagan and Christian symbolism reflecting the influences of the Arawak natives and Spanish missionaries on the island.

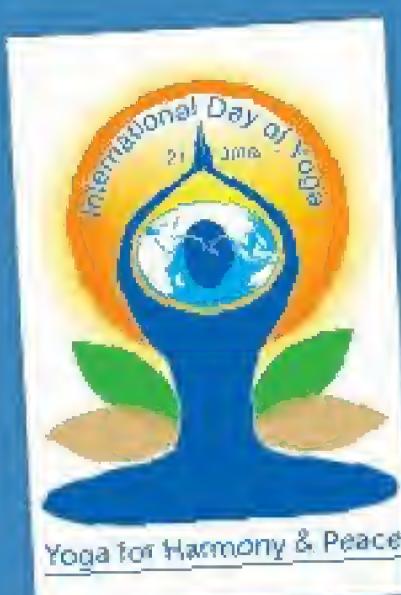
Traditionally, the Dera Gai celebration was centered on an unusual ritual. A hole was dug in the ground, and a live rooster was buried in the hole up to its neck. Blindfolded revelers would then be given three tries to decapitate the rooster with a long pole (piñata-style). (The Catholics considered this ritual to be symbolic of the decapitation of St. John the Baptist while the pagans believed that the spilling of the blood would fertilize the earth for the next growing season.) The one to carry

out the deed was rewarded with bottles of alcohol and other prizes.

Today, a more humane approach is taken. For example, at the Dera Gai celebration in Santa Cruz—one of the biggest Dera Gai celebrations on the Island—revelers are blindfolded and tasked with locating a flag staked into the ground while swaying their hips to the rhythms of a band. Every now and then, the coordinator of the game fools the blindfolded participants by moving the flag while the game is in progress. Folk dance groups also reenact the burying and decapitation of the rooster using a plastic rooster. Decked out in bright yellow-and-red

costumes—the yellow said to represent the bloom of the local kibrahacha tree in the month of June—these groups also perform harvest dance rituals. Many years ago, bonfires were built on the eve of St. John's Day in order to communicate the arrival of the holiday

to neighbors. The old clippings from the previous year's harvest would be burnt in preparation for the coming growing season. Nowadays, the fires are burnt island-wide on St. John's Day itself, serving as an olfactory reminder of this unique local festival.



FIRST INTERNATIONAL Day of Yoga

Sunday, 21st June 2015 at Prana Yoga Center

INDIAN Association of Aruba in collaboration with Prana Yoga Center organize Yoga Day activities 4:30 to 7 p.m. this Sunday, the 21st June 2015 at Prana Yoga Center. On this occasion we are pleased to advise that various groups from Aruba have joined hands to put together the following program:

4:30: Welcome and Yoga Session
4:45: Demo by teachers and students in the garden.

5:30: Quantum Yoga mini lesson



CHURCH **SERVICE** on Karel Doorman Ship

SUNDAY, June 21st 2015, starting from 9:30 am, there will be a church service on the Karel Doorman ship. This is the newest and biggest acquisition of the Royal Navy, which is anchored at the harbor town of Aruba.

It will be a double celebration. This is the first time that a church service will be held on the ship and it is also the first time 4 children of the members of the Royal Navy will be baptized in this ship. The musical entertainment will be presented by Catherine Provence-Hanrath (keyboard), Rousseau and Jean Ricardo Normil and Jean Baptiste Antoine (vocals).

During the church service, there will be a special service for the children, where they will be entertained with special activities. After the church service is over, coffee and tea will be served to all who attend.

Please come on time at the entrance of the terminal. Bring a valid identification. For more information, please contact Ds. Gert Pennekamp at 592-0259.

uba, in active

ga Center, will

in Aruba from

21st June 2015

is day, we are

yoga trainers in

it up a program

Sun Salutation

together in the

lectures by Ellen

Buermans (founder of Prana)

6.30: Yoga On and Off the Mat by Marcelle (certified vinyasa teacher)

7.00: Closing with "Unify" Sun Salutation followed by 15 minutes meditation

Activities will also include a Healing Sound Concert (with 17 Tibetan Bowls) by Ellen Biermans and a beautiful yoga video throughout the afternoon.

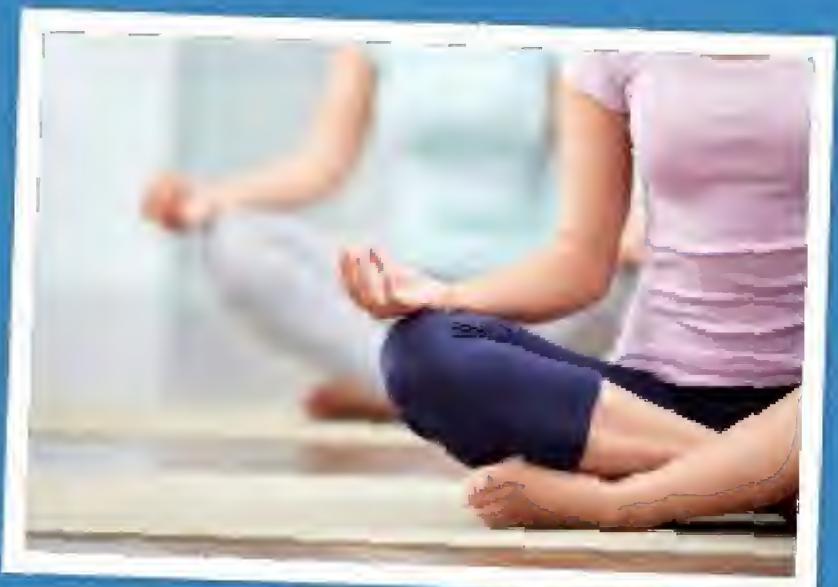
Prana Yoga is located at Zepp Lampstraat # 10 between Colegio Arubano and Plaza Beticos

Croes. ALL ACTIVITIES OF YOGA DAY WILL

BE FREE OF CHARGE TO THE PARTICIPANTS.

Everyone and all are welcome to join and get a taste of Yoga activities in Aruba. For further information, please call 588 2882 or 661 8133.

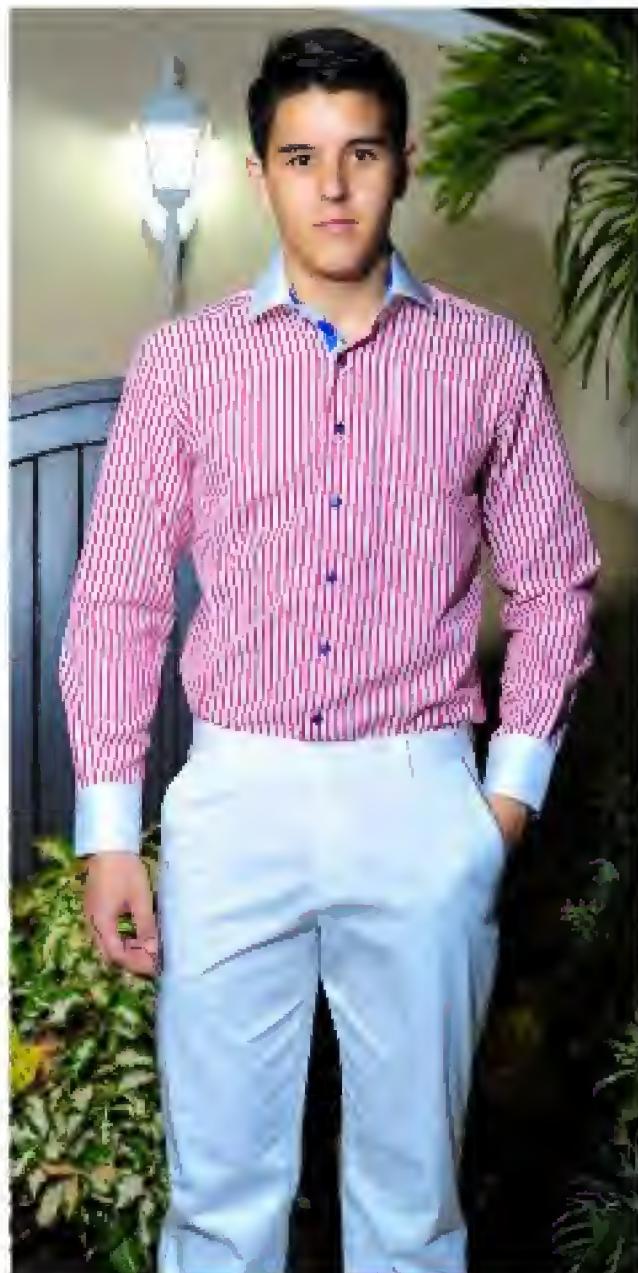
Indian Association and Prana Center recognizes the willing cooperation by many Yoga organizations like Yoga for All Aruba, Yoga for Spanish community, Dushi Yoga, Bramha Kumaris, Fresh juices and smoothies by Tribu Organics and Sup Yoga by Yogi Nathalie.



TRASH BY RONCHI

Launches NEW COLLECTION for Graduation and Prom

For Men



THE most important moment in the life of the students who worked hard all year is approaching.

Most high schools will be having graduation ceremonies to celebrate the achievements of the success of their students. You're going to remember your graduation and prom for the rest of your life. It can be a time of laughter, dancing, fun, and celebration.

TRASH BY RONCHI celebrates the success of each student and launches a new collection for men especially dedicated to Graduation and Prom.

Our collection carries the very latest in men's clothing, with the latest colors and cuts in shirts and pants. Graduation ceremony and Prom can be a great experience. Our team is ready to give the best tips of fashion that can make the experience last a lifetime.

Come visit at Sibelius Straat # 8. We are open from Monday to Friday from 10:00 am until 7:00 pm. For more information, call us at 582-6632 or visit our facebookpage TRASH BY RONCHI

Common knee surgery may NOT HELP You, Study Finds



A COMMON type of knee surgery to ease pain and clean up worn-out knees may not be worth the time and effort for middle-aged patients, researchers have reported.

A review of many different studies on arthroscopic knee surgery found it helped for a few months, but not for much longer than that, and had dangerous side-effects including blood clots and infection.

It might be better to treat dodgy knees with weight loss and exercise instead, the researchers write in the British Medical Journal.

"The small, inconsequential benefit seen from interventions that include arthroscopy for the degenerative knee is limited in time and absent at one to two years after surgery," Jonas Bloch Thorlund of the University of Southern Denmark and colleagues wrote in their report.

It's a very common operation, although it's becoming less and less common as specialists learn that surgery isn't often the answer. According to the American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine, more than

4 million knee arthroscopy procedures are done worldwide each year; 700,000 in the United States alone.

"Some of this is patient demand," said Dr. David Teuscher, President of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons. And knee pain is common. Americans make more than 5.7 million visits to the doctor for knee pain each year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

But is surgery the answer?

Thorlund's team looked at nine different studies involving more than 1,200 middle aged or older patients with knee pain and degenerative knee disease who got arthroscopic knee surgery involving partial meniscectomy, debridement, or both. Their assessment: surgery is not helpful.

"When we analyzed pain for different postoperative time points, the benefit favoring arthroscopic surgery was present only at three and six months, but not at later time points," Thorlund's team wrote.

And it comes with side-effects. "Harms included symptomatic deep venous thrombosis, pulmonary

embolism, infection, and death," they wrote.

"Taken together, these findings do not support the practice of arthroscopic surgery for middle-aged or older patients with knee pain with or without signs of osteoarthritis," they concluded.

Teuscher says there are a few situations where surgery is appropriate, but patients don't need an expensive MRI scan to find out. "You need to get the right kind of x-ray," he said. Other than patients with specific injuries or damage, exercise and over-the-counter pain medication may be a better answer.

Dr. Elizabeth Matzkin of Brigham & Women's Hospital in Boston agrees. "More often than not, the knee pain can be treated without surgery," Matzkin wrote in a blog post for the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons.

"Obesity causes increased load on the muscles and joints. The knee joint feels five times body weight each step we take -- so a weight loss of even five pounds can feel like a 25-pound weight loss to your knee."

Justin Bieber and Usher Face \$10 Million Copyright LAWsuit

NOT good news for Justin Bieber and Usher. A court ruled Thursday that the pair will have to face a \$10 million lawsuit alleging copyright violation for "Somebody to Love," a single off Bieber's *My World 2.0*.

The 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Richmond, Va. voted 3-0 to revive a 2013 lawsuit by singer Devin Copeland (stage name De Rico) and songwriter Mareio Overton.

In the original lawsuit, they assert that multiple versions of the Bieber/Usher effort sound very similar to their song, also named "Somebody to Love," according to court records acquired by EW. The case was initially dismissed in 2014, with a ruling that the two sounded noticeably different. The court found the opposite true Thursday.

"After listening to the Copeland song and the Bieber and Usher songs as wholes, we conclude that their choruses are similar enough and also significant enough that a reasonable jury could find the songs intrinsically similar," Circuit Judge Pamela Harris wrote, via Reuters.

Copeland and Overton claim they wrote the song, which appeared on Copeland's 2008 album, *My Story II*. After getting in contact with Usher's people, they allege he and other songwriters "conspired...to directly copy Plaintiffs' song 'Somebody to Love,' intending to appropriate Plaintiffs' intellectual property as their own." Usher ultimately gave the song to Bieber—which was released in 2010—and appeared on a remix of the record.

Comcast Founder Ralph Roberts **DIES** at 95

One of his sons is now
Comcast's chairman

RALPH Roberts, a businessman with a gentle demeanor who built Comcast from a small cable TV system in Mississippi into one of the nation's largest entertainment companies, has died. He was 95.

Comcast says in a statement that Roberts died

Thursday night in Philadelphia of natural causes. Roberts jumped into the fledgling cable TV industry in 1963 by spending \$500,000 to buy American Cable Systems, a company in Tupelo, Miss. He then acquired other cable systems, changed the name of the company to Comcast and ran the company until

he was in his 80s.

He handed control of the company to one of his sons, Brian, who is now Comcast's chairman and CEO. The younger Roberts expanded beyond his father's vision and led Comcast to own NBCUniversal.



Gunman charged with 9 COUNTS of MURDER in S.C. attack

A FORMER friend who had reconnected with the man accused of a shooting massacre inside a historic black church in Charleston, South Carolina, said Dylann Storm Roof had become an avowed racist.

Joey Meek reconnected with Roof a few weeks ago and said that while they got drunk together on vodka, Roof began complaining that "blacks were taking over the world" and that "someone needed to do something about it for the white race."

Roof, 21, is accused of fatally shooting nine people during a Bible study at The Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston on Wednesday night, ripping out a piece of South Carolina's civic heart and adding to the ever-growing list of America's racial casualties.

He is charged with nine counts of

murder and possession of a weapon during the commission of a violent crime, police said Friday. Under South Carolina law, the latter charge is common when a weapon such as a knife or gun is used in a violent crime, whether it was legally owned or not.

Police captured Roof in Shelby, North Carolina, after a motorist spotted him at a traffic light on her way to work. His apprehension ended an intense, hours-long manhunt.

On Friday morning, South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley said, "We will absolutely want him to have the death penalty."

Charleston officials announced a prayer vigil for Friday evening. The city's mayor described the shooting at the church as an act of "pure, pure concentrated evil."

The victims included a state senator

who doubled as the church's minister, three other pastors, a regional library manager, a high school coach and speech therapist, a government administrator, a college enrollment counselor and a recent college graduate — six women and three men who felt called to open their church to all.

President Barack Obama called the tragedy yet another example of damage wreaked in America by guns.

On his Facebook page, Roof displayed the flags of defeated white-ruled regimes, posing with a Confederate flags plate on his car and wearing a jacket with stitched-on flag patches from apartheid-era South Africa and Rhodesia, which is now black-led Zimbabwe.

His previous record includes misdemeanor drug and trespassing charges.

Spilling blood inside a black church — especially "Mother Emanuel," founded in 1816 — evoked painful memories nationwide, a reminder that black churches so often have been the targets of racist violence.

Its lead pastor, state Sen. Clementa Pinckney 41, was a married father of two and a Democrat who spent 19 years in the South Carolina legislature after he was first elected at 23, becoming the youngest member of the House.

The other victims were Cynthia Hurd, 54; Tywanza Sanders, 26; Myra Thompson, 59; Ethel Lance, 70; Susie Jackson, 87; and the reverends DePayne Middleton Doctor, 49; Sharonda Singleton, 45; and Daniel Simmons Sr., 74.

U.S. Attorney General Loretta Lynch said the attack would be investigated as a hate crime.



TALIBAN Warns ISIS to Stay Out of Afghanistan

THE Afghan Taliban on Tuesday warned ISIS militants to stay out of Afghanistan in a rare open letter to the extremists that have conquered swathes of the Middle East. The Islamic Emirate — the Taliban's name for Afghanistan — only allows the struggle "against foreign invaders to be under the leadership of" the Taliban, read the letter signed by the group's

deputy leader Akhtar Mohammad Mansour shared. "Jihadi groups across the Muslim world are struggling for Islam and they have their own organizational structure," continued the letter, which was addressed to ISIS' leader, Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi. "If your meddling in their affairs creates division, it will cause in bloodshed within these organizations."

The lengthy statement was issued amid reports of deepening divisions within the Afghan Taliban, with some commanders supporting peace talks with the government and others vowing to continue fighting until the last foreign soldier left the country. In January, ISIS' media arm declared Afghanistan and neighboring Pakistan to be one region called the province

of Khorasan, prompting some fighters to pledge allegiance to the group.

According to the government of the eastern province of Nangahar, around 100 families have been displaced by fighting among militants in the last three weeks. About 150 fighters have been killed during that time, a spokesman for the provincial government stated.





Thailand confirms its first case of MERS, **Outbreak 'LEVELED OFF' in South Korea**

THAILAND has confirmed its first case of MERS, representing a further spread of the deadly respiratory disease from the Middle East to eastern Asia, Thai Public Health Minister Rattana Rajatanavin said. A man was diagnosed with MERS after he traveled to Thailand from a Middle Eastern country on June 15, Rajatanavin said. He was being treated in a private hospital in Bangkok on Thursday where his condition was said to be stable. Thailand would be the 26th country with confirmed Middle East respiratory syndrome cases since the disease was identified in Saudi Arabia in 2012. The patient was in Thailand to receive treatment for heart disease, and was taken to the hospital when he displayed flu-like symptoms.

South Korean toll up

The disease continues to claim lives in South Korea, where officials announced a further death in the

country's outbreak Friday, raising the total death toll to 24.

But Kwon Deok-cheol, an official with Ministry of Health and Welfare leading MERS task force, told reporters at a press conference that the outbreak had "leveled off."

"Looking at the currently trend, we have judged that situation has leveled off," said Kwon.

"But as I've mentioned earlier, we need to watch for further spread."

According to South Korea's Ministry of Health, the latest patient to die was in his 70s.

A new case was also announced Friday, bringing the total number of cases to 166.

Thirty of those afflicted have recovered, leaving a total of 112 currently receiving treatment.

The number of people under quarantine in the country dropped to 5930, with 5161 people under

house quarantine and 769 quarantined in facilities. WHO 'wakeup call'

More than 100,000 tourist visits to South Korea have been canceled in response to the outbreak, the biggest outside Saudi Arabia.

The World Health Organization has described the MERS outbreak as a "wakeup call."

It said that the number of new cases "appears to be declining" -- indicating that the outbreak could be slowing down.

But it also warned that "all outbreaks are unpredictable" -- especially for new diseases that are not well understood.

South Korea's Yonhap news agency reported that President Park Geun-hye's job approval rating had fallen to an all-time low over the outbreak, dropping to 29 percent.

Saudi Arabia, Russia SIGN nuclear power cooperation DEAL

SAUDI Arabia and Russia have signed an agreement to cooperate on nuclear energy development, a Saudi government body in charge of such projects said.

The government body, the King Abdullah City for Atomic and Renewable Energy, announced the cooperation deal on its website on Thursday but gave no further details.

Saudi-owned al-Arabiya TV, citing unnamed sources, said the kingdom planned to build 16 nuclear reactors in which Russia would play a significant role in operating them.

The Saudi atomic and renewable energy body has already signed nuclear cooperation deals with countries able to build reactors, including the United States, France, Russia, South Korea,

China and Argentina.

It is not clear if this new deal, announced on Thursday, will take cooperation with Russia to a more advanced level.

Saudi Oil Minister Ali al-Naimi was due to meet his counterpart Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak in St Petersburg on Thursday to discuss a broad cooperation agreement.

In 2012, Saudi Arabia said it aimed to build 17 gigawatts (GW) of nuclear power by 2032 as well as around 41 GW of solar capacity. The oil exporter currently has no nuclear power plants. Nuclear and solar power stations would reduce the diversion of Saudi Arabia's oil output for use in domestic power generation, leaving more available for export.



At Least 25 DEAD, 10 CRITICAL After Drinking Illegal Liquor in Mumbai Slum

THREE people have been charged with culpable homicide for brewing the moonshine

At least 25 people died at a slum in the Indian city of Mumbai this week after consuming illicit liquor that left 10 others in critical condition at local hospitals.

The problems with the homemade alcohol began on Wednesday, with 13 people from the city's Malad area losing their lives by Thursday night and the death toll rising more than two dozen by Friday morning, the Press Trust of India reported.

Three people have been arrested by the Mumbai police and charged with culpable homicide not amounting to murder, causing hurt by means of poison etc. with intent to commit an offense and acts done by several persons in furtherance of common intention, under various sections of the Indian Penal Code.

Improperly distilled liquor can include hazardous levels of methanol—a toxin commonly found in antifreeze and windshield wiper fluid that can cause blindness and even death when ingested.

Mumbai Police spokesperson Dhananjay Kulkarni said details such as the type and make of the liquor, how many people drank it and where it was distilled are still under investigation.



Earth Just Had Its WARMEST SPRING on Record

IT was officially the warmest May ever, too

This year is shaping up to be a hot one—literally. This past May was officially the warmest on record, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration said in a new report. What's more, researchers say Earth experienced the warmed spring and first five months of the year on record, too. Land and sea temperatures

across the globe were higher than the agency has ever recorded in more than 130 years.

Last month was 1.57 degrees Fahrenheit above the average worldwide of 58.6 degrees, the agency said. And the spring averaged 1.53 degrees above the typical temperature. In the U.S., May turned out to be the country's wettest month on record.



Japan Says Hopes to RESUME WHALING Later This Year, Hurdles Remain

JAPAN hopes to resume whale hunting in the Antarctic later this year, a top official said on Friday, despite a finding by the International Whaling Commission that Tokyo had yet to prove the kill was scientifically justified.

In April, an IWC panel of experts said it opposed Japan's proposal for its Antarctic whaling program in the Southern Ocean because it did not demonstrate a need for «lethal sampling,» prompting Japan to submit additional information.

The IWC's Scientific Committee said in a report released on Friday that Japan's additional material had failed to clear all doubts about whether «lethally obtained data» would contribute to management and conservation of whales, calling on Japan to provide even more analysis.

Last year, the International Court of Justice ruled that Japan's decades-old whale hunt in the Southern Ocean should stop, prompting Tokyo to cancel the

bulk of its whaling for the 2014-2015 season. Officials said then that whaling would resume in the 2015-2016 season, under a revised plan.

“There's no change in our stance on resuming whaling,” said Joji Morishita, Japan's commissioner to the IWC, at a news conference.

Japan has long maintained that most whale species are not endangered and that eating whale is part of its food culture. Its most recent whaling plan proposed to take 333 minke whales in the Antarctic.



Floyd Mayweather admits he is yet to decide opponent for final fight



FLOYD Mayweather insists he is still considering his next opponent for his planned farewell fight in September. The American superstar has vowed to hang up his gloves after his 49th bout, expected to be held in Las Vegas on September 12, but is yet to choose the man in the opposite corner.

Mayweather this week suggested he would even offer a rematch to the 42-year-old Oscar De La Hoya, who has since ruled out coming out of retirement to avenge his 2007 points defeat. Amir Khan has made renewed efforts to finally land a lucrative clash against the unbeaten 38-year-old, but he will have to wait longer for Mayweather's final decision.

"I look forward to fighting this September, hopefully we've got a good competitor", he told Mayweather Promotions.

"I'm pretty sure we will have a solid competitor. Everything takes time, we'll see. We don't know yet. We have to take time and we'll see."

Khan revealed how he held heated discussions with Mayweather's father, Floyd Senior, about the much-talked about clash. He said: "He thinks Floyd can beat me easily, so I said 'alright, if that's the case, then let's get a fight made'.

"Then he went all crazy on me and there was lots of swearing. I've got a video, I've not posted it yet, but I am going to.

"I did get under his skin. He knows I am the guy to maybe beat his son. He doesn't like the fight between me and Floyd because he knows I could cause him big problems. "We are getting very close to a fight, I hope."





Mo Farah insists he has NEVER TAKEN performance- enhancing drugs

MO Farah has insisted he has never taken performance-enhancing drugs following reports that he missed two drug tests in the build-up to London 2012. The double Olympic champion's coach Alberto Salazar, along with Farah's training partner Galen Rupp, are currently under the microscope over doping allegations.

Both men have denied the allegations, while Farah has not been accused of doing anything wrong. "I have never taken performance enhancing drugs in my life and I never will," said Farah in a statement.

"Over the course of my career I have taken hundreds

of drugs tests and every single one has been negative. I've fully explained the only two tests in my career that I have ever missed, which the authorities understood, and there was never any suggestion that these were anything more than simple mistakes.

"The last two weeks have been the toughest of my life – with rumours and speculation about me that are completely false – and the impact this has had on my family and friends has left me angry, frustrated and upset.

"In particular, the media pressure on my young family and my wife, who is five months pregnant, is

extremely painful, especially as I'm away training for some important races.

"As I made clear, I went to Portland to speak to Alberto Salazar and demand answers. He reassured me that the claims are false and that he will soon be providing evidence to make that clear. Until then I will not be commenting further on the allegations.

"I would like to take this opportunity to thank my fans, family, friends and teammates for all the great support they have provided over the last few days and hope that I will now be allowed to focus on my training and winning medals for my country."

Real Madrid's Sergio Ramos was OFFERED to BARCELONA

REAL Madrid defender Sergio Ramos was offered to Barcelona as a "trump card", according to one of the candidates in their upcoming presidential elections.

Jordi Majo, who will run for the top job at the Nou Camp next month, was quoted in Spanish newspaper Sport as saying they were given the opportunity to sign the 29-year-old.

Presidential candidates in the past at Barcelona have tried to boost their chances in the past by promising a big-name signing should they win.

"A while ago we were offered him, a month-and-a-half ago roughly," said Majo. "I don't know if anyone else was, but we are not going to play that game; we will not be a reason for him and his brother to increase their pay at Real Madrid."

"If another candidate has been offered him and accepted, that's their problem, but we totally ruled it out."

"We have not had contact with Rene (Ramos' agent). We believe it's a case of mutual interest, between them and another candidate (to be Barça president). It is what it is."

Ramos, who has made more than 400 appearances for Real since signing in 2005, is reportedly embroiled in a pay dispute with the club which could see him seek a move away from the club this summer.

